



WEEKLY REPORT

ARIZONA STATE RETIREMENT SYSTEM

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For the week ending Friday, November 19, 2004

Welcome to the ASRS Weekly Report. This report provides a briefing of news and notices important to member employers and your employees. Please direct comments or email address updates to WeeklyReport@asrs.state.az.us or phone (602) 308-5107.

***** Please distribute or make this report available to your employees. *****

ASRS News

As required by state statute, the Arizona State Retirement System adjusts contribution rates every two years to ensure the pension plan, retiree health insurance supplement plan and long-term disability plan remain fiscally sound.

At its Board meeting on Friday, the ASRS Board of Trustees moved to accept the actuarial valuation of the pension plan, and set contribution rates for the next fiscal year.

Due to a variety of factors, including past benefit increases, mid-term investment returns and changing demographics of the ASRS membership, the ASRS will be increasing contribution rates for the period from July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2007. These new rates will take effect July 1, 2005.

- **Retirement and Retiree Health Insurance Plans:** Increase from the current 5.2 percent of employee and employer contributions to a rate of 7.75 percent.
- **Long Term Disability Plan:** No increase from the current 0.50 percent of employee and employer contributions.
- **Combined Contribution Rate:** Increase from the current 5.70 percent to 8.25 percent.

Additional information on the new rates is posted on our website, www.asrs.state.az.us.

Let us help you plan your retirement

The Member Services Division of the ASRS conducts educational meetings available to all members. As our membership continues to grow, we continue to look to improve our services. Effective January 1, 2005, the ASRS will offer three different types of meetings to assist you on your path to retirement: **Group Meetings, Seminars and Service Purchase Meetings.**

Group Meeting: Are you planning to retire within one year? In preparation for retirement, learn about potential monthly benefits and options available, completing retirement paperwork, health insurance, and returning to work.

Seminar: Open to all members. In preparation for retirement learn about the ASRS, benefits as an active, inactive and retired member, member responsibilities, how retirement benefits are calculated, wills and trusts and Social Security benefits.

Service Purchase Meeting: Open to all members. Learn about the Service Purchase process, types of service purchase, cost calculations, and payment options.

Reservations are required and can be made by calling our offices at (602) 240-2000 in Phoenix, (520) 239-3100 in Tucson and 1 (800) 621-3778 outside Phoenix and Tucson.

ASRS Group Meetings, Seminars, and Service Purchase Meetings schedules may also be found on our website at www.asrs.state.az.us. Click on “Calendar” at the top of our homepage.

Employer Relations 101 Workshops Offered

The ASRS Employer Relations division is concluding its series of ER 101 workshops, with the last one set for Dec. 6.

These new workshops are designed to assist employers in training new staff about their responsibilities in dealing with the retirement system. Subject matter includes determining membership, long term disability, contribution reporting, return to work rules and more.

It's not too late to register!

Workshop Dates: Dec. 6, 2004
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
3300 N Central Ave., Phoenix, 10th floor Board Room

Reservations: Space is limited! Register today by sending an email with your name, title, employer name and telephone number to: **WeeklyReport@asrs.state.az.us**

Service Purchase Notice

ATT: Employees who work less than a full 12-month work year

The ASRS has reviewed and revised its practice for accepting Service Purchase requests for member employees who work less than a full 12-month year.

It had been ASRS practice to accept Service Purchase requests from members who were presently making contributions to the Retirement System. However, it was brought to the attention of the ASRS that some employees, especially school teachers, work full time but on a nine-month calendar. During the months that these employees were not working and not making contributions to the Retirement System, they were generally instructed that their Service Purchase request could only be processed during the months that they were contributing.

Service Purchase requests will now be accepted for these employees, under the terms of meeting all other eligibility criteria.

This notice is to advise members who may have been denied the opportunity to file a Service Purchase request under the circumstances described above that they may re-file their request, and may be eligible to purchase that service now, under the terms that existed when the initial inquiry was made. This opportunity to re-file a request will be extended only through Dec. 31, 2004 and must be accompanied by a “Service Purchase Confirmation Statement.” This statement form may be found on the ASRS website under the category “Forms” and the subcategory “Other Forms.”

Questions regarding this matter should be directed to the ASRS Member Service Division, which can be reached via email at contactus@asrs.state.az.us, or by calling (602) 240-2000 in the Phoenix area, (520) 239-3100 in the Tucson area, or toll-free at 1(800) 621-3778.

Board & Committee Meetings

- **ASRS Board of Trustees** – Friday, December 17, 8:30 a.m., ASRS Phoenix office, 3300 N. Central Ave., 10th floor Board Room.
- **Operations Review Committee** – No meeting until January.

- **External Affairs Review Committee** – Friday, December 3, 10 a.m., ASRS Phoenix office, 3300 N. Central Ave., 14th floor conference room. This meeting will be a teleconference only.
- **Investment Review Committee** – Tuesday, December 7, 5:30 p.m., ASRS Phoenix office, 3300 N. Central Ave., 14th floor conference room.

Note: All Board & Committee meetings are open to the public and your attendance is encouraged. Schedules, agendas and minutes of our meetings are posted on our website and are available at our Phoenix and Tucson offices.